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THOMAS JONATHAN "STONEWALL" JACKSON  
"FOUGHT BY THE OLD TESTAMENT, LIVED BY THE NEW"

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ANDRE L. FRANCIS  
United States Army

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THOMAS JONATHAN "STONEWALL" JACKSON:  
"FOUGHT BY THE OLD TESTAMENT, LIVED BY THE NEW"

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

Lieutenant Colonel Andre L. Francis  
United States Army

Doctor Jay Luvaas  
Project Adviser

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Last but not least, I praise my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for allowing me to do His Will and write this paper.

## ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Andre L.Francis, Lieutenant Colonel, United States Army  
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Lieutenant General Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson was a superb professional soldier who was a "profoundly and, some say, a fanatically religious" leader "with a precise regard for discipline and army regulations."

My purpose has been to research, study, and analyze the influence of Christian faith and a fervent religious belief on the personal ambition, eccentricities, and leadership style of General Jackson.

**To Elsa, Carl, and My Parents**

O God  
Early in the morning  
    I cry to You  
Help me to pray  
And to concentrate  
    my thoughts on You:  
I cannot do this alone.  
In me there is darkness.  
But with you there is light;  
I am lonely,  
    but You do not leave me;  
I am feeble in heart  
    but with you there is peace.  
In me there is bitterness,  
But with you there is patience;  
I do not understand your ways,  
But You know the way for me.

--Dietrich Bonhoeffer  
(1906-1945)

(Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a  
German pastor who was imprisoned  
in 1943 for his stand against  
anti-Semitism. He wrote this  
prayer just before his execution.)

## INTRODUCTION

In the early years of the Civil War, Major Thomas Jonathan Jackson, the devout deacon of Lexington (Virginia) Presbyterian Church, erupted suddenly into General "Stonewall" Jackson, the "pious blue-eyed, killer"<sup>1</sup> and latter-day Joshua of the Confederate Army. And in war as in peace, his peculiar weave of personality, ambition, and religion still puzzled friends, foes, superiors and subordinates.

Reminiscent of "Tom Fool" Jackson of his Lexington years, the General remained maddeningly eccentric. "He thought one of his arms heavier than the other and would keep it raised to allow the blood to return to his torso."<sup>2</sup> and he would refuse to read, write or send a letter on a Sunday in deference to its sanctity as a holy day.

"If silence be golden, he was a bonanza," wrote General Dick Taylor, a Jackson subordinate. "Praying and fasting appeared to be his idea of the 'whole duty of man.' "<sup>3</sup>

Despite his strange ways, however, the ubiquitous "Old Jack" Jackson was the acknowledged master of deception, surprise, and maneuver. In a cartoon of the times, a federal officer depicted Jackson and his soldiers hiding behind some trees on the right flank of a Union squad of "Yankees." The Union soldiers were frantically looking through their telescopes in an attempt to find him. As they asked themselves: "Where is Jackson?" a kneeling Jackson, with hand on saber and poised to attack,

shouted: "Here I am!"<sup>4</sup>

Jackson himself likely would have laughed at the officer's humorous but accurate portrayal of his battle tactics. "Always mystify, mislead, and surprise the enemy, if possible," he once told a trusted subordinate. "Never fight against heavy odds, if by any possible manoeuvreing you can hurl your own force on only a part, and that the weakest part, of your enemy and crush it...." "To move swiftly, strike vigorously, and secure all the fruits of victory, is the secret of successful war."<sup>5</sup> This would be the way the pious Presbyter would fight and destroy Union armies.

Jackson would prove to have few problems reconciling his religion with his tactics but both his admirers and detractors would question the seemingly odd mix. How could he fight so hard and so bloodily yet be so devout? And how did he mix piety and war; were they not insoluble--like oil and water? Some would separate the two and, so doing, would liken him to a "Saint" Jackson in his personal life and a "Devil" Jackson in battle:

Who would expect the deacon, the teacher of a Sunday-school class of Negro children...to be the genius of troops who disappeared mysteriously into the forest or vanished behind the hills, moved with incredible speed, and reappeared mysteriously and shriekingly to hit with the fury of aroused angels when and where they were least expected? The General seemed two men: the combination seemed paradoxical. But there it was! A saint who in military action was the very devil of a fellow!<sup>6</sup>

Douglas Southall Freeman, the great Lee biographer and author of the classic *Lee's Lieutenants* depicted Jackson as a "fanatically religious man" who lived "by the New Testament" and

fought "by the Old."-- a "Presbyterian deacon who delight(ed) in theological discussion" in peace and then became a "reincarnated Joshua." in war.<sup>7</sup>

Also questioned was Jackson's ambition--again, in contrast to his religion. Did he use religion as the theological cover over his desire for fame and glory on the battlefield or did he suppress his personal ambition to his religious beliefs? subordinate his personal ambition to his religion?

Confederate general D.H. Hill, Jackson's "close friend and brother-in-law," believed Jackson struggled constantly with his ambition and his religion. "The biographer of Stonewall Jackson is a poor philosopher who does not point out the connection between the severe struggles of the man with himself & the giant wrestling of the General with his enemies."<sup>8</sup>

In *Lee the American*, Gamaliel Bradford would write:

And how did Jackson's ambition and his religion keep house together? His admirers maintain that religion devoured the other motive completely. Duty alone constrained him to forego the happiness and comforts of his beloved home for the daily hardships of a soldier's life. But certain of his reported words in the very closing scene make me think that the thirst for glory was as ardent as ever, even if it had a little shifted in its form. 'I would not agree to the slightest diminution of one shade of my glory there (in heaven), no, not for all the fame which I have or shall ever win in this world.' It does not quite sound like the chastened spirit of the Son of Peace does it?<sup>9</sup>

And in his book, *The Destructive War*, Charles Royster maintained that "Jackson had constructed by his own design the public character that brought him fame:"

Before Jackson became "Stonewall" he had found an

identity through filling the public roles of patriot and evangelical Christian. By making his behavior consistent enough to carry conviction to others, he strove to persuade himself that the consistency arose from an inner harmony of his thoughts and desires. His effort had to be constant; no degree of success could quiet it. Finally it sought to create a nation. Not only would God validate the Confederacy through war, but the Confederacy would also, in the process, validate the man Jackson had made. Both in his own mind and in the minds of many Southerners his character, his beliefs, and his methods seemed inseparable from the new nation's success. This striving on a continental scale brought to a climax the two concerns that long had pervaded his life; his Christian faith and his worldly ambition.<sup>10</sup>

The thesis of this paper will show that Jackson did subordinate his ambition to his religion in a gradually evolving process that caused him to attribute all of his actions and success to the Will of God.

## CHAPTER 1

### The Early Years

Thomas Jackson was born about January 21, 1824 in Clarksburg, Virginia, based on the best account he could give of his birth. His maternal grandfather, Thomas Neale, was the namesake for his first name. In later life, Jackson would take Jonathan, his father's first name, as his middle name.

He was the third of Jonathan and Judith Neale Jackson's four children. Jonathan Jackson, of distinguished family and promising prospect, was a popular lawyer whose penchant for gambling and risky investment ruined his family's estate. Judith, or, more commonly, Julia Jackson was an attractive, frail woman of considerable fortitude, good education, and keen intelligence. Likely, she was a member of Clarksburg's Presbyterian congregation which offered some indication that she may have been a staunchly religious. Jackson had an elder brother and sister, Warren and Elizabeth Jackson, and a younger sister, Laura Ann.

Within nine years after Jonathan and Julia Jackson were married, terrible tragedy struck their family. In 1826, when Jackson was only two years old, his six year old sister, Elizabeth, died of typhoid fever. Twenty days later, his father-weakened from caring for his sister also died of the fever. The next day, Jackson's younger sister, Laura Ann, was born.

The death of Jackson's father left Julia Jackson almost destitute.<sup>11</sup> Married at nineteen, widowed at twenty eight, and now on her own, she struggled to raise her three children. In 1830, when Jackson was almost seven years old, she married Blake B. Woodson. Woodson, a Clarksburg lawyer like Jackson's father and a widower as well, was a well mannered, likable man but considered a ne'er'-do-well by many townspeople--including Julia's family. Long on talk but short on cash, Woodson took a position as Court Clerk of Fayette County, a mountainous, largely unsettled county in rural Virginia.

The Woodsons could not afford to bring Warren, Thomas, and Laura Ann with them to the small town of Ansted, Virginia where they finally settled. A weakened and now pregnant Julia Woodson at first compromised by only sending ten year old Warren to his Uncle Alfred Neale's house "in Wood County on the Ohio."<sup>12</sup> But Julia was forced eventually by the harsh realities of meager funds and advanced pregnancy to send Thomas and Laura Ann away too.

When one of Jackson's uncles came for the young Jackson and his sister, he ran into the woods and did not return until evening, when he agreed to go with his uncle after some coaxing, prodding, and bribing. The next morning the uncle took Jackson and his sister to Jackson's Mill to stay with their fraternal grandmother, uncles and aunts.

Jackson saw his mother for the last time in the autumn of 1831. Becoming desperately ill after the birth of Jackson's

half-brother, William Wirt Woodson, she had called for all of her children. It is known that Jackson and his sister, Laura visited her; it was likely that her son, Warren, visited her as well.

At thirty-three years old, Julia Neale Jackson Woodson gave her last wishes and blessings to her children and died. Her husband, Blake gave her a final tribute:

...perfectly in her senses, calm, and deliberate, she met her fate without a murmur or a struggle... No Christian on earth, no matter what evidence he might have had of a happy hereafter, could have died with more fortitude.<sup>13</sup>

All three children stayed with Blake Woodson until he died a short time later. Cummins Jackson came again to take young Jackson and his sister, Laura, back to Jackson's Mill to live with the paternal Jacksons. Sometime in 1835, Laura went to live with their maternal relatives, the Neales.<sup>14</sup>

At seven years old, Jackson had become a "penniless orphan" and "by the age of eleven had seen the deaths of an infant sister, his father, his mother, and his stepfather, and had been separated from his brother and surviving sister."<sup>15</sup> He "had sustained losses that sobered him then and affected him the rest of his life."<sup>16</sup>

The death of his mother had caused him the most pain and suffering. A Jackson authority, Charles Royster, commented:

Out of the flux of his early years, he most vividly recalled his mother, especially the pain of his first parting from her and her death. He thought of her as 'the impersonation of sweetness, grace, and beauty.' He believed that his and his sister's coming to Christ was the answer to their mother's prayers. When naming his daughter for her, he wrote: "My mother was mindful

of me when I was a helpless fatherless child, and I wish to commemorate her now.'"<sup>17</sup>

More tragedy and pain would pervade Jackson's boyhood before Jackson entered West Point in 1842 at the age of eighteen. In 1841, his twenty year old brother, Warren, would die of tuberculosis. And between 1840 and 1841 when he was either fifteen or sixteen, Jackson developed dyspepsia. Dyspepsia was a form of simple indigestion. But Jackson's dyspepsia would cause him acute stomach pain and leave him searching throughout his life not only for its cure but for all manner of other remedies to improve his health.

His severely painful illness and the deaths of almost all of the members of his immediate family had caused Jackson to suffer enormously before he had even reached the age of eighteen. "Why have I suffered so much and what meaning comes from my suffering?" Jackson may well have asked himself.

Author-psychiatrist and former Nazi concentration camp internee Dr. Victor Frankl could explain Jackson's circumstance in this way:

Suffering is an ineradicable part of life, even as fate and death. Without suffering and death human life cannot be complete.

The way in which man accepts his fate and all the suffering it entails, the way in which he takes up his cross, gives him ample opportunity--even under the most difficult circumstances--to add a deeper meaning to his life. ...Here lies the chance for a man either to make use of or to forego the opportunities of attaining the moral values that a difficult situation may afford him. And this decides whether he is worthy of his sufferings or not."<sup>18</sup>

Likely Jackson did not understand why he suffered such tragedy; its religious and philosophical implications--such as Frankl has set forth--were much beyond his early education and experience. Not until his late twenties and his early thirties would he attribute its meaning to a starkly Calvinistic and fatalistic Christian ethic.

Jackson did choose, however, to find meaning in his life based upon the suffering he had experienced. He strove to attain Frankl's "worthiness" through highly moral personal conduct and behavior. It too constituted his attempt to vindicate his father's name and honor his mother's hard but upright life.

Now Jackson began to earn reputation for diligence and scrupulous conduct that would characterize his entire life. Undoubtedly he was ambitious for "he was obsessed with the idea that he must make something of himself."<sup>19</sup> But it was not a blind ambition that sacrificed moral conduct for expedient behavior. In fact, "his truthfulness was at all times proverbial" and he had once said to a very close friend that "so far as he remembered he had never violated the exact truth in his life, save once."<sup>20</sup> That occurred while exhorting his men to fight a battle in the Mexican War by telling them "You see there is no danger; forward" when indeed they were in a "perilous" circumstance.<sup>21</sup>

His honesty "had something to do with what his mother expected of him and how he ought to represent the family."<sup>22</sup> As an example, Jackson once commercially fished for a local

gunsmith. When a local colonel attempted to bribe him out of a three foot pike he had caught in the Monongahela River for the gunsmith, Jackson refused stating: "I can't take it..." "this fish is sold..." "I have an agreement to furnish him (the gunsmith) a fish for a certain length for fifty cents" and "he is going to get this big fish for fifty cents."<sup>23</sup>

When he was only seventeen years old, Jackson's reputation for impeccable character, the need to improve his physical health, as well as the need to be able to financially support himself led to his appointment as a district constable. In this role, he was "a sort of minor sheriff"<sup>24</sup> who chiefly served warrants and summoned witnesses in behalf of the Justice of the Peace of the county's court. At the same time, he also furthered his reputation for honesty and singleness of purpose by outwitting a recalcitrant debtor.<sup>25</sup>

Throughout his youth Jackson's morality was a basically secular one and showed little of the fervent religiosity that would mark his later years. His revered uncle and surrogate father, Cummins, was "utterly devoid of Christianity,"<sup>26</sup> "The Christianity of the region was not influential," and "ministers were few, and deficient in intelligence and weight... ."<sup>27</sup> Despite these circumstances, there were substantial indications that Jackson's behavior was influenced by church attendance and his personal study of the Bible.

Wrote the daughter of a local Methodist minister: "Thomas Jackson, a shy, unobtrusive boy, sat with unabated interest in a

long sermon, having walked three miles in order to attend."<sup>28</sup> Jackson himself was known to have "gladly read the Scriptures or discuss theological matters if asked."<sup>29</sup>

Around 1840, Jackson made friends with Joe Lightburn. Both of them would become Civil War generals but for now:

... Joe Lightburn had a copy of Parson Mason Locke Weems' *Life of Francis Marion*, and Tom had a Bible. Each armed with a book, the two young men met many times for joint reading and talking excursions.... If Tom mentioned the Swamp Fox later, no record of it survives. But Francis Marion would have watched with special interest what in later years his disciple was doing. In his mature years the Bible was never far from Tom.<sup>30</sup>

The religious influence on young Jackson was strong enough for him to consider the ministry. After the Civil War, Joe Lightburn became a Baptist minister and Jackson apparently thought about becoming a minister--even at this early age. What deterred him, however, was his "deficiency in education and a fear of public speaking."<sup>31</sup>

In the eighteen years before Jackson entered the United States Military Academy in 1842, he had formed the moral foundation of the rest of his life. And that moral foundation was firmly laid by the bricks of the tragic losses within his family, the fond memories of his mother, the industry of his Uncle Cummins Jackson, and the influence of church and Bible. Whatever Jackson became, this foundation would never leave him; instead, he would build upon it the further moral and ethical floors that would eventually lead him to become a staunch Christian. Jackson's ambition would never leave him completely;

he would learn to temper it with the devotion to a Higher Purpose in his life and his profession. And like his religion and his ambition, his eccentricity would grow to a proportion that would make it seem that he was spirit-like and other-worldly.

CHAPTER 2  
WEST POINT AND THE MEXICAN WAR

WEST POINT

Jackson entered the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York in 1842 when he was eighteen years old. His uncle, Cummins Jackson, had helped him to apply knowing his nephew was "anxious for an education."<sup>32</sup> Jackson knew that his character and ability were sure but that his formal education was limited. When challenged by a benefactor that his education was "too scanty" for the Academy, Jackson had replied: "I know I shall have the application necessary to succeed...." "I am determined to try, and I wish you to help me to do this."<sup>33</sup>

Despite his resolve, Jackson was in desperate academic circumstances at the outset of his entrance into West Point. As was the case in his younger days, Jackson suffered--this time from his disadvantaged educational background.

The first semesters at the Academy were "hideous ordeals."<sup>34</sup> So profusely would he sweat when his turn came to recite or answer questions, many of his classmates thought "he would flood the room."<sup>35</sup> And he would feel distinctly uncomfortable among his more sophisticated and urbane classmates such as George McClellan, Ambrose Powell Hill, and Dabney Herndon Maury.

Jackson nevertheless remained grimly determined to succeed and fulfill his ambition of gaining education and position in

life. He studied almost ceaselessly, resolving never to "turn a page until he had absorbed its contents" and to "never move beyond an assignment until he had mastered it."<sup>36</sup> He became the living embodiment of the first ethical maxim he would develop while at the Academy and what would become the "guiding principle throughout [his] life: " You may be whatever you resolve to be."<sup>37</sup> If he worked at it, he could do it--by sheer "concentration, strain, sweat, and endurance."<sup>38</sup>

In his desire to succeed, he developed more eccentricities. Nicknamed "The General" in honor of General Andrew Jackson, Jackson came to West Point dressed in "a wagoners hat,...large heavy brogans with weather-stained saddlebags over his shoulders."<sup>39</sup> Jackson was clumsy and experienced a great deal of difficulty in learning close-order drill.

Always concerned about his health, Jackson took serious things seriously to the point of sitting stiffly upright in his chair, saying little to anyone and looking at the wall to better concentrate on the problems before him.<sup>40</sup> When he studied, his posture was just the opposite: he would never lean over his books; instead he would slouch. Another Jackson peculiarity was to eat a large amount of a few items and leave the rest of the meal for friends. Because he told few of his friends and colleagues about his chronic stomach disorder or dyspepsia, many believed his manner to be eccentric rather than actions to relieve him of his physical discomfort.<sup>41</sup>

Jackson also developed more moral and ethical maxims, the written adjuncts to his pre-West Point years. These could not yet be termed as Christian ethical and moral maxims: rather they were maxims or rules for a "good" man to follow who may or may not have been a committed Christian.

Jackson wrote his maxims down in a notebook:

Through life let the principal object be the discharge of your duty.

Sacrifice your life rather than your word.

Speak but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and if you speak, speak accordingly.<sup>42</sup>

Another page began with his personal philosophy called "Motives to Action:"

1. Regard your own happiness.
2. Regard for the family to which you belong.
3. Strive to attain a very great elevation of character.
4. Fix upon a high standard of action and character.<sup>43</sup>

He liked "abstract" subjects such as ethics. In 1845, he achieved ranking "in the first section" in ethics and wrote his sister, Laura that he considered this science "preferable to any other in the [Academy] course."<sup>44</sup>

He did not intend to stay in the army. He was homesick for friends and his sister whom he wrote: "I intend to remain in the army no longer than I can get rid of it with honor, and means to commence some professional business at home."<sup>45</sup>

Nevertheless, Jackson was commissioned a Second Lieutenant of Artillery in June of 1846 at the age of twenty-two. He had

graduated 17th in "the order of general merit" of a West Point class of 59 graduating cadets. As a portend of his future interest in theology and his professorship in natural philosophy at the Virginia Military Institute, Jackson was 5th in the order of merit list for ethics.

In character, Jackson had suffered--and won! He had continued to set high moral standards of conduct and behavior--even to the point of writing them in a notebook to combat his suffering and to overcome his disadvantage. However, Jackson's morality and ethics still were not a Christian ones although some religion entered into his thinking:

It does not appear that Jackson was under the influence of vital Christianity at West Point. Speculatively, he was a believer; outwardly, he was observant of the decencies of religion, and his morals were pure; but the sacred impression of his mother's piety and teachings was as yet dormant.<sup>46</sup>

It was in Mexico where Christianity began to enter Jackson's life.

#### The War in Mexico

Jackson's ambitions for his life--although not necessarily for his profession--were realized in the War with Mexico. He only had gone to West Point to realize his ambition for a formal education. Now he longed to return home, among his family and friends, to establish himself in business. The war interfered with these plans but Jackson with the same grim resolve he had shown in earlier years was determined still to make a name for

himself. He "wanted to see active service, to be near the enemy in the fight."<sup>47</sup>

Lieutenant Jackson distinguished himself in combat and became an authentic war hero. In one battle, he was cited for "conspicuous" conduct under fire and for "invaluable service...in the face of a galling fire from the enemy's position."<sup>48</sup> After battle at Vera Cruz, he was promoted to first lieutenant for "gallant and meritorious conduct."<sup>49</sup> For his brave actions at a battle near Chapultepec, he was promoted to brevet captain and shortly afterwards, promoted again to brevet major. In the company of future Union officers such as McClellan, Pope, Hooker, and Shields and future Confederate officers such as Lee, A.P. Hill, Longstreet, and Ewell, Jackson "was promoted more frequently than any other officer in the United States Army in Mexico."<sup>50</sup> He had certainly achieved his ambition for academic achievement and battlefield fame. Jackson now would be accused of not being "a perfect Christian soldier" but, in stark contrast, of being "one of the most egotistical soldiers in Mexico."<sup>51</sup>

Clearly, he found it difficult to bridle his excesses of ambition and pride. When ordered to duty at Jalapa--an assignment that he keenly disliked--Jackson justified the reason for it in a letter to his sister, Laura, stating:

I throw myself into the hands of an all wise God and hope that it may yet be for the better. It may have been one of His means of diminishing my excessive ambition; and after having accomplished His purpose, whatever it may be, he then in His infinite wisdom may gratify my heart.<sup>52</sup>

Colonel Frank Taylor, commander of the First Artillery in Mexico, attempted to temper Jackson's ambition and pride with Christianity. Taylor was a man of "fervent prayer" with strong "theological beliefs." who believed Jackson insecurities and overcompensation in ambition and pride to be the result of the loss of both his parents in his earlier years.<sup>53</sup> Jackson decided to "make the Bible his study"<sup>54</sup> and to examine the theology of the most prevalent denomination in Mexico--the Catholic Church. Despite frequent consultation with the Archbishop of Mexico, he was unable to reconcile "the system of the Bible and that of Rome," and he felt "that the true religion of Jesus Christ was to be sought elsewhere."<sup>55</sup>

Although he had shown a marked interest in religion, D.H. Hill, a fellow officer, future Confederate general and brother-in-law remarked that Jackson "in Mexico...had no particular regard for religion... ." "Tenderness of conscience was the only religious element in him, so far as I could judge."<sup>56</sup>

Brevet Major Jackson left Mexico in 1848 as a officer of the highest reputation for bravery and courage under fire. He remained beset by unbridled ambition and pride--perhaps, over-compensations for the suffering and tragedy in his earlier life. Francis Taylor had provided a religious spark to the fires of ambition, pride, and ethical behavior that raged within Jackson. Although, he affiliated with no denomination, there was an "awakening" in Jackson that began to place God as the center of the meaning in his life and profession. He experienced a

"yearning for something deeper and more spiritual, something fundamental and everlasting."<sup>57</sup>

At Fort Hamilton, he met Colonel Taylor again. A severely dyspepsic, eccentric, and ambitious Jackson still was unsure about church affiliation but would be baptized "a Christian, not an Episcopalian,"<sup>58</sup> in the small Episcopal Church in front of the fort.

### Chapter 3

#### The Lexington Years

After his tour of duty at Fort Hamilton, New York and a relatively brief but controversial stint at Fort Meade, Maryland, Jackson settled for ten years at Lexington, Virginia. There, in August, 1851, at age twenty-seven, Jackson became professor of Natural and Experimental Philosophy and Artillery Tactics at the Virginia Military Institute.

Within a few months after his arrival, Jackson's former colleague in the Mexican War and future brother-in-law, D.H. Hill introduced Jackson to Presbyterianism. From *The Presbyterian Shorter Catechism of Faith*, Hill questioned Jackson on its definition of Sin. The answer: "...any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God" impressed Jackson for its "brevity and comprehensiveness."<sup>59</sup> Jackson himself was a "precisionist"<sup>60</sup> who liked to give and follow sharp, crisp, to-the-point orders. In this way, *The Shorter Catechism* appealed to him so he borrowed it and *The Presbyterian Confession of Faith* from Hill.

Jackson studiously compared the two tracts with the Bible and was "pleased with everything except its views on predestination and infant baptism."<sup>61</sup> Jackson later abandoned his views on infant baptism but, some thirty years later, Hill wrote that "in the last years of his [Jackson's] life he was

regarded as a fatalist, but his repugnance to predestination was long and determined."<sup>62</sup>

In the ensuing months, Jackson studied Presbyterian theology expressing some doubts to a close friend concerning its doctrine. The friend replied that if Jackson had those views, he should become a Methodist. Jackson at once talked with Dr. William S. White, the pastor of Lexington's Presbyterian Church, who convinced Jackson that he should become a Presbyterian although "his doctrinal theory [was] not in perfect accord with ours."<sup>63</sup>

On November 22nd, 1851, Jackson became a Presbyterian. Its form of worship would complement his personality: it was "simple and friendly" and although it had "little formality," it did possess a "dignity of ritual."<sup>64</sup> Their God and now his God would be "a stern God but a just One."<sup>65</sup> And Jackson's communion with his God would be "direct, personal, and intimate."<sup>66</sup>

He became an extraordinarily devout Christian and Presbyterian. He had transformed himself from Jackson the ethically good man to Jackson, the utter personification of Christian man:

In ten years, it would be difficult to find in the entire Presbyterian Church any other member who disciplined himself so strictly, obeyed what he believed to be the will of God so absolutely, attended so zealously to the responsibilities which went with membership, prayed so fervently, or found so much happiness in his religion.<sup>67</sup>

Jackson would suffer more tragedy in his life that would test the measure of his Christianity. On the 4th of August, 1853, Jackson married Elinor Junkin, the daughter of a

distinguished college president in the Lexington community. Almost a year later, Elinor's mother died. As the family gathered to grieve her death,

...they were aided in the belief that all pains must be suffered in this world for the greater glory of God--the Puritan creed, in which Jackson, of course, was a firm believer. The Junkins liked to quiz him. What if he were blinded--how would he feel about the love of God toward him? "Such misfortune would not make me doubt the love of God." Say he was put on a rack of interminable pain for his whole mortal life--what then? "I would endure it and thank God."<sup>68</sup>

His views continued to bring "wonder, argument, and teasing mischief" from the Junkins:

...what if he were at the mercy of others whom he had no control? Put him on a bed of pain, immobile, sentenced for a lifetime and at the mercy of the eternal charity of others--what then, Jackson? He considered: "If it was God's will, I think I could be there content for a hundred years!"<sup>69</sup>

A little more than a year later Elinor Junkins Jackson after delivering a stillborn child would follow her mother in death. Jackson was devastated taking care "not to sin by questioning in his heart the wisdom and rectitude of God's dealings with him."<sup>70</sup> Later, he wrote: "From my heart, I thank God that though He has left me to mourn in human desolation, He has taken dear Ellie to himself."<sup>71</sup>

Jackson married a second time on July 16, 1857 to Anna Morrison whose sister was married to D.H. Hill. From December through February of the next year, Jackson's health worsened. He experienced "a very painful neuralgia," almost "lost the use of one ear," and suffered great problems with his eyes.<sup>72</sup>

On April 30, 1858, Anna Jackson gave birth to a daughter. Less the thirty days later, she would be dead of jaundice. Jackson acceded to "his Father's will"<sup>73</sup> but undoubtedly the loss of a second child grieved him greatly.

In three years, Jackson would leave Lexington to fight on Virginia's side in the Civil War. And just as his youthful years in Clarksburg and his cadet days at West Point had tempered him for the Mexican War so would his years at Lexington do the same for his entry into the War Between The States.

For before Lexington, Jackson had sought to find meaning in his life from the suffering he had faced and, consequently, had become keenly ambitious, notably eccentric, and ethically correct. It seemed now--as he entered the Civil War having faced more suffering and pain--that he had found not only more meaning for the suffering but, as well, the meaning of his suffering. All of this was now attributable to the Will of God, a will that Jackson incontrovertibly believed in !

### The War Years

Jackson's generalship in the first two years of the Civil War was the equivalent of a held breath. A sense of urgency attended every aspect of it: the forced marches up and down the Shenandoah in the Valley Campaign and his quick strike on Shields at Kernstown were prominent examples.<sup>74</sup>

Whatever his mix of religion, personality, and ambition, Jackson was a formidable warrior. To the Union generals, the alarm of Jackson's sudden movements to close with and destroy them was always ringing in their minds. "Never, never take counsel of your fears,"<sup>75</sup> he once had said to his brilliant engineer, Jed Hotchkiss; but the Yankee generals often chose to ignore his advice. As a consequence, Jackson's reputation as a general to be reckoned with rose to almost mythological proportion.

The first real rush of his career began at First Bull Run or First Manassas as many would call it. There Jackson stood with his soldiers as a "stonewall" according to his hard-pressed colleague and former West Point classmate, Brigadier General Bernard Bee. Bee would die during the battle unable to confirm or deny whether Jackson and his brigade had earned the resulting sobriquet "Stonewall" because of tough defense or failed offense. Turned down, he waited another turn to beat them.

From the Shenandoah to Chancellorsville, Jackson continued his fast-paced montage of battles. Like a latter-day Muhammad Ali, he did not win all the time but when he did the Union

generals were like "helpless fighters slipping along the ropes onto the canvas, one right after another."<sup>76</sup>

He demonstrated a unique blend of religion, ambition, and personal eccentricity that yielded him great success in battle yet surrounded him in great personal controversy. An example was Jackson's "Valley Campaign" started when Major General Joseph E. Johnston, Commander of the Army of Northern Virginia and Jackson's superior gave Jackson a seemingly impossible mission. Johnston made Jackson responsible for drawing Union Major General Nathaniel P. Banks' V Corps into the Valley to prevent Banks' reinforcement of Major General John B. McClellan's Army of the Potomac. Jackson was to do this with no undue risk to his own forces who numbered only 4200 soldiers as opposed to Banks' 38,000. Mindful of his tenuous circumstance, Jackson asked for more men but Johnston refused him any reinforcement, particularly from Jackson's brother-in-law, General D.H. Hill, and his 3000 man division.

A disappointed but courageous Jackson was left alone in the Valley after Johnston retired from Centerville to defend Richmond from a threatening McClellan. Although faced with Banks' numerically and logistically superior force, Jackson still relied on a Calvinistic fatalism that cast aside any personal fear and anxiety about the mission Johnston gave him. "My religious belief teaches me to feel safe in a battle as in bed." he said. Furthermore "God has fixed the time for my death. I do not concern myself about that."<sup>77</sup>

Jackson appeared to use the Old Testament hero, Joshua, as the religious example to support his belief that victory in battle was the manifestation of God's will. Once he asked a staff officer, Lieutenant James P. Smith, where "the Bible gives generals a model for their official reports of battle?"<sup>78</sup> When Lieutenant Smith replied that he never had thought of looking in the Bible for this, Jackson commented:

Nevertheless, there are such; and excellent models, too. Look, for instance, at the narrative of Joshua's battle with the Amalekites; there you have one. It has clearness, brevity, fairness, modesty, and it traces the victory to its right source--the blessing of God.<sup>79</sup>

As his tactics and campaign strategy were rooted deeply in the Old Testament, Jackson planned to defeat Union forces in the Shenandoah just as Joshua, had defeated the Amekalites--and the Amorites--in Canaan.<sup>80</sup> Jackson decided to destroy Union forces wherever and whenever he could and to protect Richmond by threatening Washington. So he planned a campaign that substituted speed, maneuver and risk for his lack of size and power. At its conclusion, Jackson had conducted a campaign up and down the 120 mile long Valley that confused and bewildered the Union leadership. He marched his "foot cavalry" an incredible 676 miles in 48 marching days,<sup>81</sup> mystifying the Union generals and Abraham Lincoln into thinking that Confederate intentions and strength were more than what they were.

Was Jackson's bold generalship just the rekindling of the unmitigated ambition of his Mexican War days? One might think so given the record of what he said and did during that war. But

given his ten years in Lexington marked by military professorship, the tragic loss of a wife and child, and devoted service to God and church, there was much more to Jackson's relentless pursuit and destruction of the enemy than blind ambition. More likely now Jackson's ambition was inexorably tied to the will of God--that is to become an Old Testament warrior who in perfect service to the Lord absolutely gave no quarter to the enemy.

It was in this context that Jackson was the fanatic, the eccentric. The proverbial beat of the Higher Drummer incessantly pounded in his mind causing him to become "a single-purpose organism"<sup>82</sup> who would characterize his unique ability to surprise, deceive, and destroy his foes as acts of Christian allegiance. And if it meant going against what he had thought was God's will versus God's actual manifestation of His will through him, then Jackson was well prepared for it.

For Jackson firmly believed God controlled all success in battle despite the overwhelming odds posed by Banks. In this sense, Jackson, the commissioned servant of God who had been destined by God to fight God's battles, could only be victorious through God's will. It would be through God's grace and His divine intervention that Jackson would achieve success in battle.

This was how he reconciled any overwhelming pride and ambition for personal fame and glory. As a Christian and Presbyterian, Jackson believed that he, as all men, was born into Sin. The most dangerous Sin of all was pride, a sin which the

British Christian apologist and author C.S. Lewis called the "complete Anti-God state-of-mind."<sup>83</sup>

As a Christian, Jackson had consciously subordinated the sin of overwhelming pride and personal ambition to God's control of his life and work. He was still personally ambitious: it was the natural state of man to be prideful and ambitious and to attribute victory to himself. But Jackson had become a committed Christian who had consciously turned his life over to God in Christ and that meant his attribution to God for all victory in battle.

Thus, he believed predominantly that recognition for victory in battle came chiefly from God. He could, however, still sin and attribute victory to himself and seek personal fame and glory from it. D.H. Hill called attention to this as the conflict between Jackson the Man and Jackson the General. It was natural for Jackson the man to lapse into Sin and think of victory won solely by Jackson the General; it was harder for Jackson the Sinful Man to believe that he was commissioned Jackson the General by God and to God went the attribution for the victory in battle.

Despite this conflict, Jackson worked to subordinate his worldly hopes and aspirations to the will of God. It appeared he did not care about personal fame and glory in battle and what others thought of him: he had replaced his personal ambition with Calvinistic fatalism. To his wife he wrote:

Don't trouble yourself about representations that are made of me. These things are earthly and transitory.

There are real and glorious blessings, I trust, in reserve for us, beyond this life...It is gratifying to be beloved, and to have our conduct approved by our fellow man, with the glory that is in reservation for us in the presence of the glorified Redeemer. Let us endeavor to adorn the doctrine of Christ our Savior, in all things, knowing that there awaits us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." I would not relinquish the slightest diminution of that glory, for all this world, and all that it can give.<sup>84</sup>

In Lexington, he had studied George Winfred Hervey's *The Principles of Courtesy*, a book about Christian conduct. Hervey forbade any "thought, word, and action which affords gratification to the worldly mind" on the "hallowed" day of the Sabbath.<sup>85</sup> Jackson took Hervey's principles to heart:

If someone brought up a secular subject on a Sunday, the Major was likely to say that they could talk about that tomorrow. If he had a trip to take, he would not travel on Sunday. If he had a letter to mail, he would try to mail it so that it could not be transported on a Sunday. ...To him, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" was an order.<sup>86</sup>

Yet Jackson received his call to war on April 21, 1861--a Sunday. A prayerful Jackson read the fifth chapter of Second Corinthians with his wife, Anna, and dutifully rallied his cadet command for travel to Richmond. As he began to prepare himself for the trip, he apparently justified his Sunday travel by keeping foremost in his mind that "there was, above all, God in His heaven, and man's duty to Him."<sup>87</sup>

Jackson--believing himself in the absolute will of God--would yet again conduct military activity on Sunday. His heroic fight at First Manassas occurred on a Sunday. He forced marched his soldiers on Sunday, May 25, 1862 in the vicinity of

Winchester, Virginia. Enjoined by one of his subordinates, Colonel Sam Fulkerson, to give his soldiers "an hour or so" of rest, Jackson answered: "I do not yield even to you in my feeling for those gallant men. But I am obliged to sweat them tonight, sir, so that I can save their blood tomorrow."<sup>88</sup> He would win on Sunday at Winchester giving thanks to God for His blessing.

At Kernstown, Jackson would fight again on Sunday, seemingly only for military expediency and without consideration for the sanctity of the Sabbath. When his wife challenged him about it, He responded:

You appear much concerned about my attacking on Sunday. I was greatly concerned, too; but I felt it my duty to do it, in consideration of the ruinous effects that might result from postponing the battle until morning. ...I hope and pray to our Heavenly Father that I may never be circumstanced as on that day.<sup>89</sup>

At Cross Keys on Sunday, June 8, 1862, Major Dabney, Jackson's chief of staff, asked whether Jackson would fight that day. He replied that he would always try to keep the Sabbath "if the enemy will let me."<sup>90</sup> There he ordered "Let 'em have it" and "sent infantrymen down the hill with bayonets." And Jackson did pray--to the point of seeming eccentricity. Then he raised up his hands, "posed as if in prayer."<sup>91</sup> During the Seven Days Campaign, General Ewell pressed Jackson for a decision which Jackson promised to give later. Ewell left Jackson's command post remarking: "Don't you know why Old Jack would not decide at once? He is going to pray over it first." Ewell returned shortly to find Jackson "on his knees" in prayer.<sup>92</sup> Jackson "prayed always, even in association with the lightest act" having said, "

I never raise a glass of water to my lips without lifting my heart to God in thanks and prayer for the water of life."<sup>93</sup>

Jackson continued to demonstrate that his leadership was founded on the will of God and his trust in Him. To a subordinate, Wheat, he remarked: "I hope you will not get hurt. Each of us has his duty to perform, regardless of the consequences. We must perform it and trust in Providence."<sup>94</sup>

He mostly was calm and introspective in his battle plans and actions. When his staff was concerned during the Seven Days campaign that they would have to correct an error in the march that would lose them two hours, Jackson "took it calmly" saying "let us trust that the providence of God will so over-rule it that no mischief will result."<sup>95</sup>

But Jackson's generalship had a darkly Calvinistic side to it, too, that manifested itself in an indifference to pain and suffering. It perhaps was the blend of his own personal tragedy and suffering that he had experienced in life which oftentimes made him to appear cruel and unduly relentless in purpose.

General A.R. Lawton once spoke of Jackson saying:

He had small sympathy for human infirmity. He was an one-idea-ed man. He looked upon the broken down men and the stragglers as the same thing. He classed all who were weak and weary, who fainted by the wayside as men wanting in patriotism. If a man's face was as white as cotton and his pulse so low you could scarcely feel it, he looked upon him merely as an inefficient soldier and rode off impatiently. He was the true type of all great soldiers...he did not value human life when he had an object to accomplish. He could order men to their death as a matter of course.<sup>96</sup>

While there is no absolute proof that Jackson based his battle tactics and leadership on the battle tactics of the warriors of the Old Testament, it is interesting to note that he led his soldiers and fought his battles very much like Joshua fought his battles against the Amorites (Appendix 1). For out of these battles and his leadership in them came a sort of ruthless, self-righteousness--at times, to the point of the ends justifying the means. And Jackson would attribute his leadership as the manifestation of the Divine Will of God.

His personal life had been profoundly influenced by his religion which carried over to his war years. Always Jackson lived by both the Old and New Testament. However, it is inconclusive as to how much the Old Testament directly influenced and shaped his leadership style in the Civil War years.

Jackson's leadership was a complex blend of religion, ambition, and suffering. He incessantly strove to prove himself and having none of the personal magnetism of a George McClellan or a John Reynolds, he seemed to have turned inward--towards ethics and religion--to overcome his insecurities. It at least accounts in some measure for his eccentric behavior: the introspective staring into campfires and passing troops and the long hours of prayer and meditation. It appeared to be his constant reconciliation of personal ambition and subservience to the Will of God until, in the fashion of the Protestant Ethic, the two became inseparable.

He seemed unable to fully trust subordinates; Dabney was the exception. He confided his plans and thoughts to virtually no one, to the point of their exasperation. It grew worse as both his formations and responsibilities grew larger. From this, one could surmise that Jackson trusted only in God but it may be that Jackson only trusted himself in the name of God.

**APPENDIX 1**

**SOME OF THE FAVORITE HYMNS OF GENERAL JACKSON**

**Amazing Grace! How Sweet the Sound**

1. Amazing grace! How sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found  
Was blind, but now I see.
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed!
3. Through many dangers, toils, and snares  
I have already come;  
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.
4. The Lord has promised good to me;  
His word my hope secures;  
He will my shield and portion be  
As long as life endures. Amen.

*John Newton*

**There is a Fountain Filled with Blood**

1. There is a fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;  
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains,  
Lose all their guilty stains,  
Lose all their guilty stains;  
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.
2. The dying thief rejoiced to see  
That fountain in his day;  
And there may I, though vile as he,  
Wash all my sins away,
3. Dear dying Lamb, your precious blood  
Shall never lose its power  
Till all the ransomed church of God  
Be saved, to sin no more,
4. E'er since by faith I saw the stream  
Your flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be till I die,

*Refrain*

*Refrain*

*Refrain*

Amen.

*William Cowper*

## APPENDIX 2

### FAVORITE SCRIPTURES OF GENERAL JACKSON

#### Psalm 51: A Prayer for Forgiveness

Be merciful to me, O God, because of your constant love.

Because of your great mercy wipe away my sins!

Wash away all my evil and make me clean from my sin!

I recognize my faults; I am always conscious of my sins.

I have sinned against you--only against you--and done what you consider evil.

So you are right in judging me; you are justified in condemning me.

I have been evil from the day I was born; from the time I was conceived, I have been sinful.

Sincerity and truth are what you require; fill my mind with your wisdom.

Remove my sin, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

Let me hear the sounds of joy and gladness; and though you have crushed me and broken me, I will be happy once again.

Close your eyes to my sins and wipe out all my evil.

Create a pure heart in me, O God, and put a new and loyal spirit in me.

Do not banish me from your presence; do not take your holy spirit away from me.

Give me again the joy that comes from your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.

Then I will teach sinners your commands, and they will turn back from you.

Spare my life, O God, and save me, and I will gladly proclaim your righteousness.

Help me to speak, Lord, and I will praise you.

You do not want sacrifices, or you would offer them; you are not pleased with burnt offerings.

My sacrifice is a humble spirit, O God; you will not reject a humble and repentant heart.

O God, be kind to Zion and help her; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Then you will be pleased with proper sacrifices and with our burnt offerings; and bulls will be sacrificed on your altar.

## APPENDIX 3

### The Amorites Are Defeated

Adonizedek, the king of Jerusalem, heard that Joshua had captured and totally destroyed Ai and had killed its king, just as he had done to Jerico and its king. He also heard that the people of Gibeon had made peace with the Israelites and were living among them. The people of Jerusalem were greatly alarmed at this because Gibeon was as large as any of the cities that had a king; it was larger than Ai, and its men were good fighters. So Adonizedek sent the following message to King Hoham of Hebron, King Piram of Jarmuth, King Japhia of Lachish, and to King Debir of Eglon: "Come and help me attack Gibeon, because its people have made peace with Joshua and the Israelites. These five Amorite kings, the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon, joined forces, surrounded Gibeon, and attacked it.

The men of Gibeon sent word to Joshua at the camp of Gilgal: "Do not abandon us, sir! Come at once and help us! Save us! All the Amorite kings in the hill country have joined forces and have attacked us!"

So Joshua and his whole army, including the best troops, started out from Gilgal. The LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them. I have already given you the victory. Not one of them will be able to stand against you." All night Joshua and his army marched from Gilgal to Gibeon, and they made a surprise attack on the Amorites. The LORD made the Amorites panic at the sight of Israel's army. The Israelites slaughtered them at Gibeon, and pursued them down the mountain pass at Beth Horon, keeping up the attack as far south as Azekah and Makkedah. While the Amorites were running down the pass from the Israelite army, the LORD made large hailstones fall down on them all the way to Azekah. More were killed by the hailstones than by the Israelites.

On the day that the LORD gave the men of Israel the victory over the Amorites, Joshua spoke to the LORD. In the presence of the Israelites he said,

"Sun, stand still over Gibeon;  
Moon, stop over Aijalon Valley."

The sun stood still and the moon did not move until the nation had conquered its enemies. This is written in *The Book of Jashar*. The sun stood still in the middle of the sky and did not go down for a whole day. Never before, and never since, has there been a day like it, when the LORD obeyed a human being. The LORD fought on Israel's side!

After this Joshua and his army went back to the camp at Gilgal.

*Joshua 10: 1-15*

### **Joshua Captures More Amorite Territory**

Joshua attacked and captured Makkedah and its king that day. He put everyone in the city to death; no one was left alive. He did to the king of Makkedah what he had done to the king of Jericho.

After this, Joshua and his army went on from Makkedah to Libnah and attacked it. The LORD also gave the Israelites victory over this city and its king. They spared no one, but killed every person in it. They did to the king what they had done to the king of Jericho.

After this, Joshua and his army went on from Libnah to Lachish, surrounded it and attacked it. The LORD gave the Israelites victory over Lachish on the second day of the battle. Just as they had done at Libnah, they spared no one, but killed every person in the city. King Horam of Gezar came to the aid of Lachish, but Joshua defeated him and his army and left none of them alive.

Next Joshua and his army went on from Lachish to Eglon, surrounded it and attacked it. They captured it the same day and put everyone there to death, just as they had done at Lachish.

After this, Joshua and his army went from Eglon up into the hills to Hebron, attacked it and captured it. They killed the king and everyone else in the city as well as in the nearby towns. Joshua condemned the city to total destruction, just as he had done to Eglon. No one in it was left alive.

Then Joshua and his army turned back to Debir and attacked it. He captured it, with its king and all the nearby towns. They put everyone there to death. Joshua did to Debir and its king what he had done to Hebron and to Libnah and its king.

Joshua conquered the whole land. He defeated the kings of the hill country, the eastern slopes, and the western foothills as well as those of the dry country in the south. He spared no one; everyone was put to death. This is what the LORD God of Israel had commanded. Joshua's campaign took him from Kadesh Barnea in the south to Gaza near the coast, including all of the area of Goshen and as far north as Gibeon. Joshua conquered all these kings and their territory in one campaign because the LORD, Israel's God, was fighting for Israel. After this, Joshua and his army went back to the camp at Gilgal.

*Joshua 10: 28-43*

## ENDNOTES

1. This quotation is taken from a line of narrative from the PBS Videoseries, *The Civil War*.
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39. Chambers, 55.

40. Chambers, 63.

41. Richards, 15.

42. Vandiver, 17.

43. Vandiver, 17.

44. Chambers, 72.

45. Chambers, 66.
46. Dabney, 37.
47. Richards, 22.
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49. Richards, 23.
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52. Richards, 24.
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54. Dabney, 55.
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56. Chambers, 145.
57. Chambers, 146.
58. Richards, 27.
59. Chambers, 242.
60. Chambers, 242.
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65. Chambers, 242.
66. Chambers, 243.
67. Chambers, 243.
68. John Bowers, *Stonewall Jackson: Portrait of a Soldier* (New York: Avon, 1989), 85-86.
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70. Dabney, 115.

71. Chambers, 258.
72. Chambers, 283.
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74. Richard Hoffer, a feature writer for the magazine *Sports Illustrated* wrote a recent article about former heavyweight champion, Mike Tyson. There was a striking similarity in the way that Hoffer wrote about the career of Mike Tyson and the way one could write of Jackson's career in the Civil War. As such, these excerpts are written in the style Hoffer used to describe Tyson's career.
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